

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005. Print.

[Metadata, citation and source](#)

Journal Hosting

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1997. Print.

Krupat, Arnold. *Ethnocriticism: Ethnography, History, Literature*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1992. Print.

Spivak, Gayatri C. *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia UP, 2003. Print.

Todorov, Tzvetan. " 'Race,' Writing, and Culture." *Critical Inquiry* 13 (1986): 171–81.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Cosmos and Hearth*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996. Print.

Leilei Chen

Faye Hammill. *Canadian Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007. Pp. 220. \$22.00.

The guide covers an immense range of events, and the supplementary reading and theoretical questions about Canadian writing are effectively divided into four precise and critical chapters. Through positioning theory that deconstructs stereotypes and juxtaposes the binary between city and forest, this is a literary approach that shifts structures of identity and location. The content as well as the introduction and conclusion are through the approach of a literary historian, and the details describe pivotal political and literary events within Canada. Faye Hammill focuses upon the English canon, and explores the topic of desire with both multiplicity and creativity. The guide is also helpful for the postgraduate student to become familiar with different histories of Canadian writing and a diverse set of texts. Hammill is determined to reflect upon the power structures of writing within the English form and frequently turns a critical gaze upon country, interpretation, and voice. In addition, electronic texts, questions for discussion, and a glossary are organized in a student resources section of the book, and an in depth chronology is provided at the beginning of the guide. Moreover, the citations of British French habitant writers and nineteenth-century literature are sufficient. These are just a few of the examples that are brought forth, and the sources are vast, for this space is also open for the academic to decide.

Even though the gargantuan fact of multiculturalism determines the literary historian viewpoint of this book, there is great attention towards “canon-making” through the structures of the English canon and that which is determined to be Canadian (16). Colonizers, the multiple historical roles of Indigenous peoples, French and English conflicts, the numerous ethnic experiences of Canada, and the divisions of city and forest are continuous themes that clarify the configuration of a Canadian identity through literature and history. Narrations which construct the English canon through opposing the Other as different or less than, including the British Canadian writing that Hammill interacts with, are written with a focus upon the feminine. For example, the Other of Hammill’s English canon is a moot point in texts by Davies, King, Highway, and Ondaatje because there is a focus upon community, terrain, and location. The gendered divisions of *Anne of Green Gables* as well as *Ana Historic* are an emphatic advantage for feminist discourse, and yet the book is wholly confined to a discussion of Canada within a shifting literary hierarchy. Hammill’s convincing textual readings demonstrate that contemporary theory, literature, and nation are not void of power structures within the logos of text and history. The guide is a helpful discussion for reviewing contemporary Canadian literature questions and exceptional issues.

The book begins with the topics of ethnicity, race, and colonization. Religion, the military, and the Canadian government are subtopics of racism and exclusion. For example, Chinese head taxes, Japanese cultural erasure in British Columbia, and Indigenous assimilation are discussed amongst a Canadian history that has collected negative and damaging actions. Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* becomes an example of conflict between the French and the English; and Hammill describes historical English cultural attitudes within this canon. The figures of Coyote and the trickster are also positioned as differences rewritten into the canon by Tomson Highway, alongside questions of displacement and self determination within Indigenous writing. The discussion encourages an awareness of voice and text. “Canadian Literature” also elicits both past and recent “non-standard English,” as well as “creative hybridity” that reviews the changing canon of an ongoing literary event, and yet the chapter focuses upon literary issues that are connected to government decisions, and political history (32).

The chapter entitled “Wilderness, Cities, Regions” opens textual discourse with discussions of community, nature, and locations. Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and specific regions of Canada are the environments which shape the narratives of Robertson Davies, Ethel Wilson, and Carol Shields. For example, the text of Robertson Davies is noted as a “traditional male-authored”

narration because of the feminine terrain and patriarchal memories associated with the wilderness (83). The characters of Davies express a solitary, pensive access to the wild from 'within' the city. Defining the terrain also includes a commute away from the city for the purpose of renewal or a "purifying return to nature" (91). Contemporary authors writing around the binary of forest/city are rewriting the cultural and English traditions of Canadian literary examples. Furthermore, there is "an increased consciousness of the complex processes by which meanings are inscribed onto—or emptied out of—landscapes" (67).

The chapter "Desire" demonstrates where politics, location, and theory either posits hegemony or inverts binary oppositions. *Beautiful Losers* becomes a text with issues about authority, order, and displacing what is acceptable or encouraged, whereas *Wild Geese* is an attempt to both tacitly repress and rewrite sexuality before the 1960's and 1970's. The topic of desire, amidst contemporary writers such as Martin Amis, Margaret Drabble, and Yves Beauchemin, is both a current and critical position to approach texts and writing in the context of desire; and this guide is an additional reference to both theoretical and metaphorical questions connected to acceptable or rewritten modules. Examining Canadian texts through the topic of desire, Hammill invokes questions of morality, public approval, and the decisions of the authors. The topic of sexuality has changed greatly over time, and the discussion of repressed or overt homosexual allusions become issues in the texts of Ostenso and Cohen. The questions do not congregate within a regulated authoritarian voice, and range in a vast discussion that raises interest in signification, linguistics, metaphor, and Canadian literature. In sum, this is an elegant and well researched position about the English canon and structural influences upon Canadian literary events.

Kimberley Gilmour